SENATE NO. 1099

AN ACT TO COMBAT TAX AND INSURANCE FRAUD

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, And by the authority of the same, as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. Chapter 62B of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2004 Official Edition, is
- 2 hereby amended by inserting after section 12A the following section: -
- 3 Section 12B. Failure to withhold taxes on wages; stop work orders; penalties; liens; actions
- 4 brought by losing bidders
- 5 (1) Whenever the commissioner or his designee determines that an employer who is required to
- 6 withhold and pay over taxes on wages as provided for by this chapter has failed to withhold
- and/or pay over such taxes, a stop work order shall be served on said employer, requiring the
- 8 cessation of all business operations. Such order shall take effect immediately upon its service
- 9 upon said employer, unless such employer provides evidence, satisfactory to the commissioner
- or his designee, of having paid any amounts due as a result of having failed to withhold and/or
- pay over taxes on wages and pays a civil penalty into the commonwealth's general funds in the
- 12 amount of one hundred dollars per day for each day such employer was not in compliance with
- this chapter counting the first date of the employer's non-compliance as the first day and date of
- payment of the penalty herein provided and of production of evidence of payment of all
- amounts due as a result of having failed to withhold and/or pay over taxes as the final day. The

provision of such civil penalties shall not have any effect on any other penalties or remedies that may be available under any other provision of law. (2) Any employer who is aggrieved by the imposition of a stop work order and the imposition of a civil penalty shall have ten days from the date of its service to appeal such order or penalty. Any employer who timely files such appeal shall be granted a hearing by the commissioner or his designee within fourteen days of receipt of appeal. The stop work order shall not be in effect during the pendency of any timely filed appeal. The commissioner shall schedule a hearing on any appeal within seven days of the filing of any appeal. The commissioner shall issue a decision on any appeal within seven days of the date of the hearing. Any stop work order and monetary penalty shall be rescinded if the commissioner or his designee finds at the hearing that the employer has at all times been in compliance with this chapter. If the commissioner or his designee finds at the hearing that the employer did or has not withheld and/or paid over taxes from wages as required by this chapter, the stop work order shall be effective immediately on the conclusion of the hearing and shall remain in effect until such time as the employer provides evidence, satisfactory to the commissioner or his designees, of having made the necessary payment of all amounts due as a result of having failed to withhold and/or pay over taxes and pays a civil penalty into the commonwealth's general funds in the amount of two hundred and fifty dollars per day for each day such employer was not in compliance with this chapter, counting the first date of the employer's non-compliance as the first day and the date of payment of the penalty herein provided and of production of evidence of payment of all amounts due as a result of having failed to withhold taxes as the final day. A stop work order and any monetary penalties assessed by the commissioner after a hearing as authorized in this section shall be final at the expiration of thirty days if no action for judicial

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review of such decision is commenced pursuant to chapter thirty A. Any person who institutes proceedings for judicial review of the final assessment of a penalty by the commissioner pursuant to this section, shall place the final amount of the assessment in an interest-bearing escrow account in the custody of the clerk/magistrate of the reviewing court. The establishment of such interest-bearing account shall be a condition precedent to the jurisdiction of the reviewing court unless the party demonstrates in a preliminary hearing held within twenty days of the filing of the complaint either the presence of a substantial question for review by the court or an inability to pay. Upon such a demonstration, the court may grant an extension or waiver of the interest-bearing escrow account or may require, in lieu of such account, the posting of a bond payable directly to the Commonwealth in the amount of one hundred and twenty-five per cent of the assessed penalty. If, after judicial review, in the case where the requirement for an escrow account has been waived, and in the case where a bond has been posted, the court affirms the penalty in whole or in part, the penalty assessed by the commissioner shall be paid with interest at the rate set forth in section six C of chapter two hundred and thirty-one. If, after such review in a case where an interest-bearing escrow account has been established, the court affirms the penalty in whole or in part, the penalty shall be paid with accumulated interest from such account. If the court sets aside the penalty the amount placed in such account or the amount posted for such bond shall be repaid together with any interest thereon. (3) Any law enforcement agency in the commonwealth shall, at the request of the commissioner, render any assistance necessary to carry out the provisions of this section, including but not limited to preventing any employee or other persons from remaining at a place of employment or job site after a stop work order has taken effect.

(4) Any employee affected by a stop work order pursuant to this section shall be paid at his or

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- her regular rate of pay, but in no event less than the minimum wage as required by state or federal wage and hour laws, whichever is higher, for the first ten days lost pursuant to such
- order and any time lost pursuant to this section not exceeding ten days shall be considered time
- worked under the provisions of chapter one hundred and forty-nine.
- 66 (5) Every state or local licensing agency shall withhold the issuance or renewal of a license or
- 67 permit to operate a business or to construct buildings in the commonwealth for any applicant
- 68 who has failed to withhold taxes from wages as required by this chapter, or who is subject to a
- stop work order. Any employer who is subject to a stop work order shall notify any state or
- 70 local licensing agency with whom the employer is dealing of the existence of any stop work
- order. If an employer who is subject to a stop work order fails to so notify the agency and is
- issued a license or permit, that license or permit shall be deemed void.
- 73 (6) Neither the commonwealth nor any of its political subdivisions shall enter into any contract
- for the performance of public work with an employer who is not in compliance with his
- obligation to withhold and/or pay over taxes from wages as required by this chapter. Any
- employer who is seeking in any manner a contract for the performance of work from the
- commonwealth or any of its political subdivisions shall notify the commonwealth or political
- subdivision of the issuance of any stop work order under this chapter, regardless of whether the
- stop work order remains in effect. If an employer who is subject to a stop work order that
- remains in effect fails to so notify the commonwealth or political subdivision and is awarded a
- 81 contract, that contract shall be deemed void.
- 82 (7) In addition to being subject to the civil penalties herein provided, an employer who fails to
- withhold taxes on wages as required by this chapter or knowingly misclassifies employees, to
- 84 avoid withholding taxes on wages, will be immediately debarred from bidding or participating

- 85 in any state or municipal funded contracts for a period of three years and shall when applicable
- be subject to penalties provided for in section fourteen.
- 87 (8) The fact of issuance of workers compensation insurance to an individual shall not be
- 88 considered in making a determination of whether the individual is an employee for purposes of
- section 1 of this chapter, or in making the determination called for by subsection 1 above of
- 90 whether an employer has failed to withhold and/or pay over taxes on wages as required by this
- 91 chapter, or in determining whether to serve a stop work order.
- 92 (9) An employer's failure to comply with his reporting obligations under chapter 62E, section 2,
- 93 with respect to a newly hired employee or entering into an agreement with a contractor for the
- 94 performance of services shall constitute prima facie evidence of his failure to withhold and/or
- pay over taxes on wages as required by this chapter, and such failure to comply with chapter
- 96 62E, section 2 shall be sufficient to serve a stop work order.
- 97 (10) The commissioner or his designee shall possess the power to issue a subpoena to any
- 98 employer commanding the production within seven days of all payroll and any other business
- 99 records, or copies thereof, that may be relevant to the determination of whether the employer is
- in compliance with his obligations under this chapter.
- 101 (14) The Department of Revenue shall provide the Secretary of Labor and the commissioners
- of the Department of Industrial Accidents and the Division of Unemployment Assistance or
- their designees full and immediate access to employer reports and notices submitted in
- accordance with chapter 62E, section 2 with respect to newly hired employees or entering into
- agreements with contractors for the performance of services
- SECTION 2. Chapter 151A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2004 Official Edition, is
- hereby amended by inserting after section 47B the following section: -

Section 41B. Failure to contribute to the Unemployment Compensation Fund; stop work orders; 109 penalties; liens; actions brought by losing bidders 110 (1) Whenever the Secretary of Labor, the commissioner or the designee of either determines that 111 an employer who is required to contribute to the Unemployment Compensation Fund as 112 provided for by this chapter has failed to do so, a stop work order shall be served on said 113 employer, requiring the cessation of all business operations. Such order shall take effect 114 immediately upon its service upon said employer, unless such employer provides evidence, 115 satisfactory to the commissioner or his designee, of having made full payment of all required 116 contributions and pays a civil penalty into the Unemployment Compensation Fund in the 117 amount of one hundred dollars per day for each day such employer was not in compliance with 118 this chapter counting the first date of the employer's non-compliance as the first day and date of 119 payment of the penalty herein provided and of production of evidence of full payment of all 120 required contributions as the final day. The provision of such civil penalties shall not have any 121 effect on any other penalties or remedies that may be available under any other provision of law. 122 (2) Any employer who is aggrieved by the imposition of a stop work order and the imposition of 123 a civil penalty shall have ten days from the date of its service to appeal such order or penalty. 124 Any employer who timely files such appeal shall be granted a hearing by the commissioner or 125 his designee within fourteen days of receipt of appeal. The stop work order shall not be in effect 126 during the pendency of any timely filed appeal. The commissioner shall schedule a hearing on 127 any appeal within seven days of the filing of any appeal. The commissioner shall issue a 128 decision on any appeal within seven days of the date of the hearing. Any stop work order and 129 monetary penalty shall be rescinded if the commissioner or his designee finds at the hearing that 130 the employer has at all times been in compliance with this chapter. If the commissioner or his

designee finds at the hearing that the employer did or has not contributed to the Unemployment Compensation Fund as required by this chapter, the stop work order shall be effective immediately on the conclusion of the hearing and shall remain in effect until such time as the employer provides evidence, satisfactory to the commissioner or his designees, of having made the necessary contributions to the Unemployment Compensation Fund and pays a civil penalty into the Fund in the amount of two hundred and fifty dollars per day for each day such employer was not in compliance with this chapter, counting the first date of the employer's noncompliance as the first day and the date of payment of the penalty herein provided and of production of evidence of full payment of all required contributions as the final day. A stop work order and any monetary penalties assessed by the commissioner after a hearing as authorized in this section shall be final at the expiration of thirty days if no action for judicial review of such decision is commenced pursuant to chapter thirty A. Any person who institutes proceedings for judicial review of the final assessment of a penalty by the commissioner pursuant to this section, shall place the final amount of the assessment in an interest-bearing escrow account in the custody of the clerk/magistrate of the reviewing court. The establishment of such interest-bearing account shall be a condition precedent to the jurisdiction of the reviewing court unless the party demonstrates in a preliminary hearing held within twenty days of the filing of the complaint either the presence of a substantial question for review by the court or an inability to pay. Upon such a demonstration, the court may grant an extension or waiver of the interest-bearing escrow account or may require, in lieu of such account, the posting of a bond payable directly to the Unemployment Compensation Fund in the amount of one hundred and twenty-five per cent of the assessed penalty. If, after judicial review, in the case where the requirement for an escrow account has been waived, and in the case where a bond has been

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posted, the court affirms the penalty in whole or in part, the penalty assessed by the commissioner shall be paid with interest at the rate set forth in section six C of chapter two hundred and thirty-one. If, after such review in a case where an interest-bearing escrow account has been established, the court affirms the penalty in whole or in part, the penalty shall be paid with accumulated interest from such account. If the court sets aside the penalty the amount placed in such account or the amount posted for such bond shall be repaid together with any interest thereon. (3) Any law enforcement agency in the commonwealth shall, at the request of the commissioner, render any assistance necessary to carry out the provisions of this section, including but not limited to preventing any employee or other persons from remaining at a place of employment or job site after a stop work order has taken effect. (4) Any employee affected by a stop work order pursuant to this section shall be paid at his or her regular rate of pay, but in no event less than the minimum wage as required by state or federal wage and hour laws, whichever is higher, for the first ten days lost pursuant to such order and any time lost pursuant to this section not exceeding ten days shall be considered time worked under the provisions of chapter one hundred and forty-nine. (5) In addition to being subject to the civil penalties herein provided, an employer who fails to contribute to the Unemployment Trust Fund as required by this chapter shall be punished by a fine payable into the commonwealth's general funds of not more than three thousand five hundred dollars or by imprisonment for not more than one year, or both. Failure of an employer, after imposition of such fine or imprisonment, to make the required contributions to the Unemployment Trust Fund under this chapter after notice by the department to do so shall, as to each notice, be deemed a further violation in respect thereof, subject to an additional fine and

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imprisonment. If such employer is a corporation, the president or treasurer or both shall be liable for said punishment. The commissioner or his designee shall have power to bring complaints against employers, including the president and treasurer of a corporation which is an employer, for violations of the provisions of this subsection, and to prosecute the same, and for such purpose may deputize one or more employees of the department to make and prosecute complaints. Complaints under this subsection shall be brought in the district court in which the principal place of business of such employer is situated, or in the district court in whose district such president or treasurer of a corporation resides. (6) Every state or local licensing agency shall withhold the issuance or renewal of a license or permit to operate a business or to construct buildings in the commonwealth for any applicant who has failed to contribute to the Unemployment Compensation Fund as required by this chapter, or who is subject to a stop work order. Any employer who is subject to a stop work order shall notify any state or local licensing agency with whom the employer is dealing of the existence of any stop work order. If an employer who is subject to a stop work order fails to so notify the agency and is issued a license or permit, that license or permit shall be deemed void. (7) Neither the commonwealth nor any of its political subdivisions shall enter into any contract for the performance of public work with an employer who is not in compliance with its obligation to contribute to the Unemployment Compensation Fund as required by this chapter. Any employer who is seeking in any manner a contract for the performance of work from the commonwealth or any of its political subdivisions shall notify the commonwealth or political subdivision of the issuance of any stop work order under this chapter, regardless of whether the stop work order remains in effect. If an employer who is subject to a stop work order that remains in effect fails to so notify the commonwealth or political subdivision and is awarded a

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(8) Any judgments obtained by the department requiring employer contributions or other payments into the Unemployment Compensation Fund, and any penalties due pursuant to the service of a stop work order under this section shall, until collected, constitute a lien upon the entire interest of the employer, legal or equitable, in any property, real or personal, tangible or intangible; provided, however, that such lien shall be subordinate to claims for unpaid wages and any prior recorded liens; and provided, further, that no lien created by this section shall be valid against a subsequent purchaser or mortgagee in good faith and for value of real or personal property from or of such employer, or against a subsequent attaching creditor, unless, with respect to real estate of the employer, a notice of such lien is recorded in the registry of deeds for the county where such real estate is located, and, with respect to personal property of the employer, said notice is recorded with the clerk of the city or town where such personal property is located. Such lien shall be considered a tax due and owing to the commonwealth, which may be collected through the procedures provided for by chapter 62C. (9)(a) Any person or firm that loses a competitive bid for a contract including but not limited to construction, repair, remodeling, alteration, conversion, modernization, replacement or renovation of a building, roadway or structure may bring an action for damages against another person who is awarded the contract for which the bid was made, if the other person was awarded the contract because of cost advantages achieved by violating the provisions of sections 13 and 14 of this chapter or by the deliberate misclassification of employees for the purpose of avoiding contributions to the Unemployment Compensation Fund. (b) A person or firm bringing an action under this section must establish a violation of said subsection or chapters by a preponderance of the evidence. Upon establishing that the violation

223 occurred, the person bringing the action shall recover, as liquidated damages, ten percent of the 224 total amount bid on the contract. 225 (c) An action under this subsection shall be commenced within one year from the date when the 226 contract is awarded. 227 (d) No plaintiff shall be allowed to recover any amounts under this subsection if said plaintiff 228 was in violation of sections 13 and 14 of this chapter at the time of making the bid on the 229 contract. 230 (e) In any action under this section, the prevailing plaintiff shall be entitled to an award of 231 reasonable attorneys fees and costs. 232 (10) In addition to being subject to the civil penalties herein provided, an employer who fails to 233 contribute to the Unemployment Compensation Fund as required by this chapter or knowingly 234 misclassifies employees, to avoid contributions to the Fund, will be immediately debarred from 235 bidding or participating in any state or municipal funded contracts for a period of three years 236 and shall when applicable be subject to penalties provided for in section fourteen. 237 (11) The fact of issuance of workers compensation insurance to an individual shall not be 238 considered in making a determination of whether the individual is performing service in 239 employment for purposes of section 2 of this chapter, or in making the determination called for 240 by subsection 1 above of whether an employer has failed to contribute to the Unemployment 241 Compensation Fund as required by this chapter, or in determining whether to serve a stop work 242 order. 243 (12) An employer's failure to comply with his reporting obligations under chapter 62E, section 244 2, with respect to a newly hired employee or entering into an agreement with a contractor for 245 the performance of services shall constitute prima facie evidence of his failure to contribute to

247 with chapter 62E, section 2 shall be sufficient to serve a stop work order. 248 (13) The Secretary of Labor, the commissioner or the designee of either shall possess the power 249 to issue a subpoena to any employer commanding the production within seven days of all 250 payroll and any other business records, or copies thereof, that may be relevant to the 251 determination of whether the employer is in compliance with his obligations under this chapter. 252 (14) The Department of Revenue shall provide the commissioner or his designee full and 253 immediate access to employer reports and notices submitted in accordance with chapter 62E, 254 section 2 with respect to newly hired employees or entering into agreements with contractors for 255 the performance of services. (15) The Secretary of Labor, the commissioner or the designee of either shall refer all 256 257 determinations of failures to comply with the obligations of this chapter to the Department of 258 Revenue and to the Attorney General for additional enforcement action. SECTION 3. Section 25C of chapter 152 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2004 Official 259 260 Edition, is hereby amended by striking out subsection (1) and inserting in place thereof the 261 following subsection: - "(1)Whenever the Secretary of Labor, the commissioner or the designee 262 of either determines that an employer who is required to provide for the payment to his 263 employees of the compensation provided for by this chapter has failed to do so, a stop work 264 order shall be served on said employer, requiring the cessation of all business operations. Such 265 order shall take effect immediately upon its service upon said employer, unless such employer 266 provides evidence, satisfactory to the commissioner or his designee, of having secured any 267 necessary insurance or self-insurance and pays a civil penalty into the private employer trust 268 fund in the amount of one hundred dollars per day for each day such employer was not in

the Unemployment Compensation Fund as required by this chapter, and such failure to comply

first day and date of payment of the penalty herein provided and of production of evidence of insurance or self-insurance as the final day. The provision of such civil penalties shall not have any effect on any other penalties or remedies that may be available under any other provision of law." SECTION 4. Subsection (2) of said section 25C of chapter 152 of the General Laws, as so appearing in, is hereby further amended by striking out the first paragraph and inserting in place thereof the following paragraph: - "Any employer who is aggrieved by the imposition of a stop work order and the imposition of a civil penalty shall have ten days from the date of its service to appeal such order or penalty. Any employer who timely files such appeal shall be granted a hearing by the commissioner or his designee within fourteen days of receipt of appeal. The stop work order shall not be in effect during the pendency of any timely filed appeal. The commissioner shall schedule a hearing on any appeal within seven days of the filing of any appeal. The commissioner shall issue a decision on any appeal within seven days of the date of the hearing. Any stop work order and monetary penalty shall be rescinded if the commissioner or his designee finds at the hearing that the employer has at all times been in compliance with this chapter. If the commissioner or his designee finds at the hearing that the employer did or has not provided for all insurance or self-insurance required by this chapter, the stop work order shall be effective immediately on the conclusion of the hearing and shall remain in effect until such time as the employer provides evidence, satisfactory to the commissioner or his designees, of having secured any necessary insurance or self-insurance and pays a civil penalty into the private employer trust fund in the amount of two hundred and fifty dollars per day for each day such employer was not in compliance with this chapter, counting the first date of the employer's

compliance with this chapter counting the first date of the employer's non-compliance as the

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292 non-compliance as the first day and the date of payment of the penalty herein provided and of 293 production of evidence of insurance or self-insurance as the final day." 294 SECTION 5. Said section 25C of chapter 152 of the General Laws, as so appearing in, is 295 hereby further amended by inserting after the words "shall be paid", in line 68, and the 296 following words: - "at his or her regular rate of pay, but in no event less than the minimum 297 wage as required by state or federal wage and hour laws, whichever is higher,". 298 SECTION 6. Said section 25C of chapter 152 of the General Laws, as so appearing in, is hereby 299 further amended by inserting after the word "fine", in line 74, and the following words: -300 "payable into the Commonwealth's general funds". 301 SECTION 7. Said section 25C of chapter 152 of the General Laws, as so appearing in, is hereby 302 further amended by striking the words "one thousand five hundred" in inserting in place thereof 303 the following words: - "three hundred five thousand." 304 SECTION 8. Said section 25C of chapter 152 of the General Laws, as so appearing in, is hereby 305 further amended by striking subsection (6) and inserting in place thereof the following 306 subsection: - "(6) Every state or local licensing agency shall withhold the issuance or renewal of 307 a license or permit to operate a business or to construct buildings in the commonwealth for any 308 applicant who has not produced acceptable evidence of compliance with the insurance coverage 309 required by this chapter by changing the period at the end of the provision to a comma, and 310 adding the following: "or who is subject to a stop work order. Any employer who is subject to a 311 stop work order shall notify any state or local licensing agency with whom the employer is 312 dealing of the existence of any stop work order. If an employer who is subject to a stop work 313 order fails to so notify the agency and is issued a license or permit, that license or permit shall 314 be deemed void."

SECTION 9. Said section 25C of chapter 152 of the General Laws, as so appearing in, is hereby further amended by striking out subsection (7) and inserting in place thereof the following subsection: - (7) Neither the commonwealth nor any of its political subdivisions shall enter into any contract for the performance of public work until acceptable evidence of compliance with the insurance requirements of this chapter have been presented to the contracting authority. Any employer who is seeking in any manner a contract for the performance of work from the commonwealth or any of its political subdivisions shall notify the commonwealth or political subdivision of the issuance of any stop work order under this chapter, regardless of whether the stop work order remains in effect. If an employer who is subject to a stop work order that remains in effect fails to so notify the commonwealth or political subdivision and is awarded a contract, that contract shall be deemed void. SECTION 10. Subsection (8) of said section 25C of chapter 152 of the General Laws, as so appearing in, is hereby further amended by adding a the end thereof the following sentence: -"Such lien shall be considered a tax due and owing to the commonwealth, which may be collected through the procedures provided for by chapter 62C." SECTION 11. Said section 25C of chapter 152 of the General Laws, as so appearing in, is hereby further amended by striking out, in lines 129 and 130, the words: - "or fifteen thousand dollars, whichever is lesser." SECTION 12. Subsection (9) of said section 25C of chapter 152 of the General Laws, as so appearing in, is hereby further amended by striking out paragraph (e) and inserting in place thereof the following paragraph: - (e) In any action under this section, the prevailing plaintiff shall be entitled to an award of reasonable attorneys fees and costs.

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338 hereby further amended by inserting the following subsections: -339 (11) An employer's compliance with his obligation to provide for the payment to his employees 340 of the compensation provided for by this chapter shall not be excused by the fact of the issuance 341 of workers compensation insurance to any individual, and the fact of issuance of such insurance 342 shall not be considered in making a determination of whether the individual is an employee for 343 purposes of chapter 149, section 148B, or in making the determination called for by subsection 344 1 above of whether an employer has failed to provide for the payment to his employees of the 345 compensation provided for by this chapter, or in determining whether to serve a stop work 346 order. (12) An employer's failure to comply with his reporting obligations under chapter 62E, section 347 348 2, with respect to a newly hired employee or entering into an agreement with a contractor for 349 the performance of services shall constitute prima facie evidence of his failure to comply with 350 his obligation to provide for the payment to his employees of the compensation provided for by 351 this chapter, and such failure to comply with chapter 62E, section 2 shall be sufficient to serve a 352 stop work order. 353 (13) The Secretary of Labor, the commissioner or the designee of either shall possess the power 354 to issue a subpoena to any employer commanding the production within seven days of all 355 payroll and any other business records, or copies thereof, that may be relevant to the 356 determination of whether the employer is in compliance with his obligations under this chapter. 357 (14) The Department of Revenue shall provide the commissioner or his designee full and 358 immediate access to employer reports and notices submitted in accordance with chapter 62E,

SECTION 13. Said section 25C of chapter 152 of the General Laws, as so appearing in, is

359	section 2 with respect to newly hired employees or entering into agreements with contractors for
360	the performance of services.
361	(15) The Secretary of Labor, the commissioner or the designee of either shall refer all
362	determinations of failures to comply with the obligations of this chapter to the Department of
363	Revenue and to the Attorney General for additional enforcement action.
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